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TO INCREASE THE POWER OF CONGRESS OVER
COMMERCE, 1785.

To the Honourable the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Memorial of the Merchants, Traders and other Inhabitants of the Town of Alexandria humbly sheweth—

That your Memorialists having considered the present situation of the United States with regard to their commerce with Foreign Nations beg leave to Observe that it is carried on upon very unequal terms and under many disadvantages. Foreigners of all Nations are freely admitted into the American Ports and to export therefrom any Commodities whatsoever, Subject to scarcely any other restrictions or duties but such as are laid upon Citizens. On the other hand the Citizens of the United States are absolutely prohibited from carrying into Foreign parts and of taking therefrom some of the most important articles of their trade. And though permitted to carry into some parts and from thence to take away some articles of inferior consideration, yet they are suffered to do it under such restrictions and extraordinary impositions as make it a disadvantageous business and in the end must operate in the nature of a prohibition—for more particular information upon this subject your Memorialists refer your attention to the well known Laws of Great Britain respecting the Trade of Foreigners with the British Dominions and to the late edict of the Council of State of the King of France, concerning commerce in the French Islands in America. Daily instances are happening of American Vessells being refused admittance into a Foreign Port, while Vessells belonging to the same Port are being received into every part of the United States without any obstruction or difficulty.

These observations will show some of the disadvantages under which our Foreign Trade now labours and your Memorialists have reason to fear that it will continue under the same circumstances untill Commercial Treaties and regulations to be made by Congress shall put it in a better situation. Therefore that the Merchants of the United States may be placed upon an equal footing with

the Merchants of Foreign Nations carrying on Trade with them, and that Congress may be enabled to treat with foreign powers respecting commerce upon terms of confidence and advantage, your Memorialists beg leave to Submit to the consideration of your honorable body whether it would not be wise politic and for the general welfare of the United States that Congress should be vested with certain rights and authorities to be properly defined and ascertained, over the foreign Trade and commerce of the several States, and that in this instance the Confederation should be altered and amended, by giving them such power as may be adequate to the great and important Object, humbly hoping that such Laws will be made and such measures taken, as to your Honourable body shall seem wisest and best for giving effectual and immediate relief touching the premises: and your Memorialists as in duty bound shall ever Pray

William Tyler	Chas. Thruston	Edward Sanford
James Kirk	Wm. Wilson	William Loury
Wm. Hartshorne	Ephraim Edwards	George Richard
R. Hoø	James Fletcher	John Somers
D. Arell	Peter Wise	Lewis Weston
John Potts, Jr.	James Parker	Wm. Ward
Saml. Arell	Agustus Delarue	Valentine Uhler
Jas. Craik, Jr.	Adam Lynn	Jonah Thompson
John Saunders	Philip Webster	Wm. Dalton
Wm. Abbott	James Hendricks	John Lordon
John Reynolds	Jacob Bontz	Danl. Mc. Pherson
James Lawrence	Wm. Ferguson	Isaac Mc. Pherson
James Gretter	John Lawton	Ja. Keith
Alex. Smith	Joshua Spiers	John Fitzgerald
David Pancoast	John Dundas	Dennis Ramsay
Aaron Herves	Wm. Armstrong	Hiram Chapin
Enoch Morgan	Lawrence Hoff	W. Brown
Thos. Shomay (?)	Wm. Keech	John E. Ford
Joseph Fulmer	Thos. Conn	Richard Conway
Wm. Finley	Alex. Couper	Wm. Duvall
Robt. Whitmore	James Adams	John Wise
James Wright	Robert Allison	Wm. Hunter
Chas. Mc. Iver	John Muire	W. Leigh
Michael Geoghegan	Edward Ramsay	Thomas Reeder
Jeremiah Mahoney	Robert Adam	Wm. Mortimer Jr.

Endorsed Alexandria Petition Nov. 5, 1785. Referred to whole
(From Virginia State Archives, Richmond.)